

A Guide to
**Comprehensive
Tobacco Free
School Policy**

**A Resource for Montana Schools
2012**

**Welcome to our
Tobacco Free
Campus!**



School policy and state law prohibit
tobacco use on all school property.

Everywhere ~ By everyone ~ At all times



opi.mt.gov

Following the passage of the Montana Clean Indoor Air Act (CIAA), the **Montana Board of Public Education encouraged all Montana school districts to adopt Comprehensive Tobacco Free School Policies**, consistent with a national trend. Additionally, these policies are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National School Boards Association (NSBA), the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), and the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE).

In response to these guidelines, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) developed the **Montana Tobacco Free School Excellence Initiative**.

MONTANA TOBACCO FREE SCHOOL EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

Mission

- ♦ The Montana Tobacco Free School Excellence Initiative exists to assist school districts and communities in reducing and preventing tobacco use.
- ♦ The mission of the Montana Tobacco Free School Advisory Work Group is to create and sustain the tools, assistance and strategies necessary to ensure comprehensive tobacco free policies are adopted and are a durable component of all Montana school environments.

Vision

In all Montana school districts and school communities:

1. There is unified and broad support for school and extended school activity environments that sustain comprehensive tobacco-free behaviors and policies; and
2. Parents and all other non-teaching staff and visitors provide ongoing support and model the behavior of no use of tobacco products; and
3. Students and community members have a sense of the importance of tobacco-free schools and maintain pride in sustaining tobacco-free environments.

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Tobacco:

Why Every School Needs a Comprehensive Tobacco Free School Policy



A Comprehensive Tobacco Free School Policy (CTFSP) does more than deter individual tobacco use. It benefits everyone by creating frameworks and systems that reinforce tobacco free norms and attitudes, involves families and communities, and creates an overall healthier school environment. Adopting CTFSP is also an important step in a school's efforts to address asthma and other respiratory illnesses. Sadly, asthma is the number one cause of school absenteeism for students both nationally and in Montana. However, the good news is that asthma can be controlled and exacerbations of asthma can be prevented.

Tobacco Products, the Real Issue

Tobacco companies must sell their product in order to make money. They use advertising to draw attention to tobacco and to convince consumers that they want and even “need,” to buy tobacco products. Industry documents have proven that tobacco companies realize they need young people to start smoking so they can replace the smokers that have died due to tobacco industry products.

Tobacco companies spend over \$48 million per year on marketing and advertising in Montana alone and tobacco kills more Americans than suicide, auto accidents, homicide, AIDS, drugs and fires combined. Today, the industry is targeting young people in more ways than ever.

Young people have always been the tobacco industry's number one target. In the words of one tobacco company, “*The base of our business is the high school student.*” ⁽¹⁾



Cigarette Use is Down



According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Montana's youth buy or smoke about 2.4 million packs of cigarettes each year ⁽²⁾. Though this number is staggering, cigarette sales have declined in recent years thanks to the Montana Clean Indoor Air Act (CIAA), tobacco free school mandates, public smoking bans and social stigma. According to the Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), there has been a 22.5% drop from the number of students who ever tried smoking from 2001 to 2011. The YRBS trend data indicates a decrease in high school student **"current" cigarette use** from 35% in 1999 to 16.5% in 2011 ⁽³⁾. For this reason, school administrators may perceive that tobacco use is not a problem at their schools given spotting students smoking on school grounds has become less common.

Montana is making steady and significant gains against underage tobacco use.
However, the tobacco industry has responded with ...

Smokeless Tobacco Products Are Up



The newest products on the market are smokeless and discreet. Today, candy-flavored tobacco comes in tea-bag like pouches, called snus that can sit undetected in a student's mouth. In Montana, 21% of high school boys used or tried chewing tobacco, snuff or dip on at least one day during the 30 days before the survey—the 4th highest rate in the nation ^(2,3). New dissolvable tobacco tablets contain 60% compressed powdered tobacco and are marketed as smoking alternatives.

Smokeless products are falsely believed to be healthier alternatives to cigarettes. However, they present significant health risks, such as oral cancer, gum disease and nicotine addiction. They also increase the risk of cardiovascular disease, including heart attacks. ⁽⁴⁾

**"[Snus are] easy,
super-discreet...none of
the teachers will ever
know what I'm doing."
- High school student**



KIDS AND TOBACCO:

A Look at the Facts

National Statistics: ⁽⁵⁾

- ◆ More than 2.6 million kids under the age of 18 are current tobacco users.
- ◆ More than 1/3 of all kids who ever try smoking a cigarette become regular, daily smokers before leaving high school.
- ◆ 81.3% of youth (12-17) smokers prefer Marlboro, Camel and Newport, the three most heavily advertised brands.



Montana Statistics: ^(6,7)

- ◆ 27.3% of high school students report they smoked cigarettes or cigars or used chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip during the past 30 days (34.2% of males and 20.2% of females).
- ◆ 8% of students had used smokeless tobacco (e.g., chewing tobacco, snuff or dip) on school property on at least one day during the 30 days before the survey.
- ◆ 4.3% of students had smoked cigarettes on school property on at least one day during the 30 days before the survey.



The Responds

Lawmakers across the country have passed several measures to combat tobacco use in its various forms.

- ◆ Congress passed the Pro-Children Act of 1994 to ensure that children are not exposed to secondhand smoke while at school.
- ◆ In Montana, lawmakers passed the 2005 Clean Indoor Air Act (CIAA) that prohibits anyone from using any tobacco products in a public school building or on any public school property at any time.*

***The law provides two exceptions:**

1. Tobacco products are permitted on school property if they are part of a teacher or administration-sanctioned educational lesson about the risks of tobacco use.
2. Tobacco products are permitted on school property if they are used as part of a Native American cultural activity in accordance with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Tobacco Use and Academic Achievement

Schools play an important role in shaping student tobacco use behaviors. Tobacco prevention education, adult role modeling of non-smoking behavior and strong tobacco free school policies combine to create a positive and protective environment in which youth can remain tobacco-free. Students with higher grades are **less likely** to engage in tobacco use behaviors than their classmates with lower grades, and students who do not engage in tobacco use receive higher grades than their classmates who do use tobacco products. (8)

Educators play a critical role in promoting and teaching lifelong healthy behaviors that will help their students become healthy adults. School administrators are in a unique position to create an environment that encourages anti-smoking tobacco beliefs and behaviors. Although the 2009 National Youth Tobacco Survey provides evidence that the United States has made dramatic progress in reducing youth smoking, the rate of decline has slowed significantly in recent years. (9) The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids urges educators to resist complacency and step up efforts to implement proven strategies in their schools.



Federal and state restrictions on advertising, promotion, and availability of tobacco products to youth must be combined with the full implementation of an

**Evidence-based,
Community-wide,
Comprehensive
Tobacco Free
School Policy**

to further decrease tobacco use among youth. (10)

What is a Comprehensive Tobacco Free School Policy?

For starters, a comprehensive policy protects students, faculty, staff, and visitors from the health risks associated with tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure on school property, in school vehicles and at school-sponsored functions.








Secondly, a comprehensive policy supports tobacco use prevention education and prohibits tobacco advertising or display of promotional products on school property or in school publications.

Finally, comprehensive policy includes provisions to inform the school community about the policy and provides information about or referral to tobacco cessation programs for students and school staff. (11)

With support and cooperation of school and community members, every school can become a Montana Tobacco Free School of Excellence.



Elements of a Successful Policy

-  **Prohibits student possession of tobacco products on school property**
-  **Prohibits all forms of tobacco use on school property or vehicles and at off-campus school-sponsored events**
-  **Includes enforcement and disciplinary procedures for violation of the policy**
-  **Includes procedures to communicate the policy**
-  **Prohibits display of tobacco industry sponsorship, advertising or marketing items**
-  **Provides tobacco use prevention education for students and teacher training**
-  **Provides cessation (quit) information for students, faculty and staff**

The Benefits of Adopting a Comprehensive Tobacco Free School Policy

Education Makes a Difference

With strong Comprehensive Tobacco Free School Policies as a foundation for creating a tobacco free environment, educators can engage in a number of efforts to teach and demonstrate healthy choices such as primary prevention efforts, education, resources to help people quit, and more. (12)

Educators are essential to help youth achieve and maintain tobacco-free lifestyles and recognize the benefits of that choice. All school personnel and students are encouraged to support the tobacco free school policy out of pride in their school and concern for the good health of the entire school body.

Student Benefits

- ◆ Healthier students learn better, have higher test scores, lower dropout rates, and less school absences
- ◆ Provides opportunity for positive role modeling
- ◆ Reinforces school-based tobacco prevention education
- ◆ Dramatically decreases the likelihood that a young person will be a tobacco user as an adult
- ◆ Prepares students for the increasing reality of tobacco-free workplaces



The Benefits of Adopting a Comprehensive Tobacco Free School Policy (cont.)



School Benefits

- ◆ Eliminates exposure to harmful secondhand smoke and reduces triggers for asthma attacks or other respiratory issues
- ◆ School programs can help prevent tobacco use and addiction
- ◆ Tobacco prevention curriculum is most credible to students if faculty and staff comply with rules
- ◆ Reduces Minor in Possession (MIP) infractions and accompanying suspensions and expulsions, thereby increasing student attendance
- ◆ Reduces the risk of fires, damage to school property and the overall cost associated with school maintenance
- ◆ Helps to protect schools from possible litigation and/or liability issues

Community/Family Benefits

- ◆ Provides community members and families an opportunity to model tobacco-free behaviors as a norm
- ◆ Positive adult tobacco-free attitudes and behaviors can result in healthier families
- ◆ Reinforces collaboration with families, peers, schools, and communities



Recognition Awards

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) offers technical assistance and awards for participating school districts/schools in recognition for adoption of CTFSP including:

- ◆ Policy assessment and support
- ◆ Letter of Recognition from State Superintendent
- ◆ New "Welcome to our Tobacco Free Campus!" **FREE** signage
- ◆ Listed as a Montana Tobacco Free School District of Excellence on OPI's website www.opi.mt.gov/tobaccoed

Communicating Your New Comprehensive Tobacco Free School Policy

Clearly communicating your tobacco free school policy to everyone involved ensures compliance and overall success. Here are some good ideas on how to let people know your tobacco policy has changed.

General Community

- Strategically placed signs
- Announcements at all school events attended by community members
- Radio/TV PSAs
- Newspaper articles
- Hand stamps at games and events
- Event programs

Faculty/Staff

- Handbooks
- Job applications
- Teacher in-service trainings on policy and implementation
- Notices in teacher lounges
- Written copy of the policy with school board support letter
- Discussion at faculty and staff meetings and new employee orientations

Students

- Morning PA announcements
- Handbooks
- Student group peer communication

Parents/Guardians

- Provide information at back-to-school night or open house events
- Include on permission slips to be signed for student participation in extra activities, include consequences for policy violations
- Newsletters
- Involve PTA/PTO groups to promote policy compliance
- Include policy information in parent correspondence

To whom does the policy apply?

Everyone—students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

What is banned in the policy?

All tobacco products (smoked and smokeless) including but not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, snuff, snus, nicotine and any other tobacco innovation.

Where is the policy applicable?

On all school property, in all school vehicles, and at all school-sponsored events.

How can we communicate our policy so everyone understands? The community, students, parents, and staff can all help get the word out.

Public Service Announcements

Messages should be positive and reinforce that comprehensive tobacco free school policy is in the best interest of everyone—educationally, socially and health-wise.

Sample Statements:

“We have a tobacco free school campus and would like to ask you to support our decision by not using tobacco here.”

“In compliance with state law and school policy, we would like to remind you to not use tobacco or nicotine products on school property.”

20-Second Message: “For the health and safety of our students, [name of school district] is proud to have a comprehensive tobacco free school policy. At this time, we would like to remind our home fans and visitors that the use of any tobacco products during tonight’s sporting event is strictly prohibited. We appreciate your support and would like to thank you for keeping our school and stadium tobacco free. Enjoy the game!”

30-Second Message: “Welcome to our tobacco free school campus. Did you know that schools that adopt comprehensive tobacco free school policies see an increase in student productivity and a decrease in absenteeism? [Name of school district] is tobacco free and we would like to remind all of our staff, students, and visitors that use of any tobacco product at this event and on schools grounds is strictly prohibited. Thank you for your cooperation and support.”

Enforcing Your Comprehensive Tobacco Free School Policy

Clear expectations

It is important to establish fair and clear written enforcement procedures and consistently enforce them. Tobacco free school environments promote the health and well-being of student and staff members. Enforcement of the policy is meant to emphasize support for good health rather than punishment.

Consistency

Make a firm commitment to enforce the policy consistently. Expect some people to test the new rules. Remember that consistent enforcement sends a clear message that the goal of a tobacco free school is important. Make sure students and staff understand enforcement procedures and ask them to help visitors learn about the school policy.

Promote tobacco free living

Engage students, staff, and families in promoting tobacco free lifestyles. Celebrate national and state events that support tobacco free living and create opportunities to share this vision with the greater community.

Regular evaluation

Regularly evaluating your school's tobacco free school policy will help address stumbling blocks and identify successes.

Enforcement Examples for Policy Violations

Student:

- Parent/legal guardian/administrator meeting
- Mandatory enrollment in a tobacco education program
- Community service
- Suspension from extracurricular activities
- Out-of-school suspension

Faculty and Staff:

- Voluntary enrollment in a cessation program
- Verbal reprimand
- Mandatory enrollment in a tobacco education program
- Written notification placed in personnel file
- Suspension

Visitor:

- Verbal request to leave school property
- Forfeiture of any fee charged for admission
- Prosecution for repeat offenses



Who can assist with policy compliance?

Students – Can foster responsibility by encouraging visitors to be good guests.

Parents – Parents and guardians can promote compliance in a non-confrontational manner.

Faculty/Staff – Faculty and staff are seen as authorities at the school and their support of school policy is powerful.

Law Enforcement/School Resource Officer – Their presence alone is often a deterrent to policy violation.

Concerned Community Members/Local Businesses – These individuals are key to consistent compliance with Minor in Possession (MIP) laws and public support of the anti-tobacco message.

City Council/Chamber of Commerce – Their public support of school policy reaches a unique audience in the community.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do we motivate students to comply with the policy?

A: Students are often pressured by their peers to use tobacco.

- Encourage non-smoking students to use positive peer pressure to encourage their peers not to violate the policy.
- Make sure students know the consequences of violating the policy, and enforce these consequences consistently.

Q: Will teachers and staff members adhere to the policy?

A: Teachers and staff who use tobacco may look for ways around the policy because of the extremely addictive nature of tobacco.

- Make sure teachers understand the consequences of violating the policy and remind them that they can leave school property if they must smoke.
- Help teachers and staff members quit by providing them with information about the Montana Quit Line and other cessation services.
- Thank teachers who comply for setting a good example.

Q: What if parents and visitors do not comply or resist the policy?

A: Parents and visitors often don't comply because they are not aware of the policy.

- Communicate the policy via letters to parents, clearly posted signs and announcements at school events.
- Remind violators about the policy by pointing to a sign or explaining the policy to them.
- Encourage students to make public addresses at sporting events, functions and assemblies requesting compliance.
- District administrators will take appropriate action as circumstances warrant for violations of the policy.

Q: What if contractors, construction crews, and maintenance people do not comply?

A: They may be unaware of the policy.

- Include compliance language in contracts with suppliers.
- Inform them about policies during the interview process.
- Include signs throughout the building and campus to reinforce the policy.
- District administrators will take appropriate action as circumstances warrant for violations of the policy.

Q: Don't we already have a law or policy that prohibits tobacco in schools?

A: Yes! The Montana Clean Indoor Air Act and the federal Pro-Child Act both address tobacco use in schools.

- A comprehensive tobacco free school policy recommends building upon those laws to protect staff, students and school systems from harm and liability.
- A comprehensive tobacco free school policy also prohibits corporate tobacco interference in schools.

Q: Isn't a tobacco-free campus a violation of smokers' rights?

A: No!

- The majority of adults understand that policies which prohibit tobacco use on campus are designed to create a healthful, positive environment for students.
- Schools can remind individuals who smoke that they are not being asked to quit, they are simply being asked to refrain from using tobacco in an environment where their tobacco use and secondhand smoke can have a negative impact on students.

Q: How does a tobacco-free comprehensive policy support school-based tobacco prevention curriculum?

A: It is part of a strategic framework to prevent tobacco use.

- Multiple strategies across multiple sectors provide reinforcement of information learned in the classroom setting.
- The message is heard in the classroom, seen in the posted notices, and modeled by faculty, staff, other students and visitors.

Q: Since it is already against the law to smoke on school property, what extra benefit do schools gain by adopting a comprehensive tobacco free school policy?

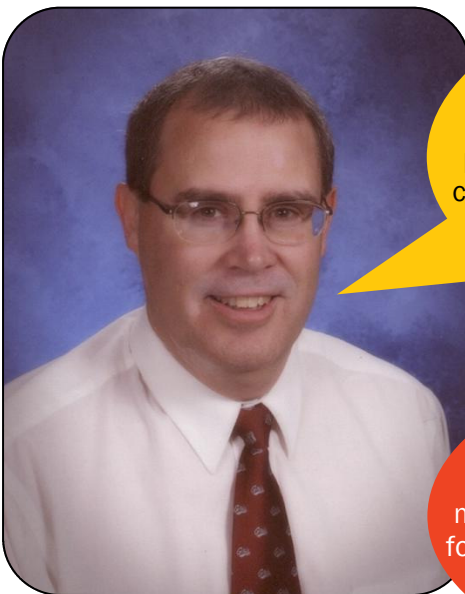
A: Schools receive new tobacco free school signage, public recognition and technical assistance from the Montana Office of Public Instruction and the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program.

Last Words

By themselves, educators in our schools cannot solve the serious health and social problems tobacco poses. However, Comprehensive Tobacco Free School Policy plays a critical role to build partnerships with families, community agencies, and organizations to improve the health and well-being for Montana's youth.

A study published in the *Journal of School Health* showed that schools with comprehensive tobacco free policies are not experiencing many of the problems or pitfalls that critics anticipated, such as enforcement. (13) Rather, these barriers to success are often based more on fear than reality. Comprehensive tobacco free policies are in place in schools around the country, and other communities have successfully dealt with similar concerns about implementation and other issues.

Statements from Montana administrators who have adopted Comprehensive Tobacco Free Policies:



Brian Patrick
Former Superintendent
Townsend K-12 Schools

"Tobacco use in the school environment has decreased dramatically in recent years. The importance of having strong, consistent policies and practices around the prevention of tobacco use cannot be overlooked. It reinforces the obligation that all schools have to provide a safe and positive learning environment for all students."

"Comprehensive Tobacco Free School Policies are an essential foundation piece for creating and maintaining a healthy and safe environment for students to learn. In polling students, they appreciate the results of implementing Tobacco Free School Policies."



Josh McKay
Principal
Helena Middle School

Helena Middle School students' responses to why they want a tobacco free school:

"We want a healthy lifestyle and don't want to die young."
"Seeing people smoke causes peer pressure."
"We want to live a long life free of cancer and asthma."
"Second hand smoke is just as bad or worse than smoking."
"Smokeless tobacco is messy and causes cancer."

Resources

Montana resources



Montana Office of Public Instruction: www.opi.mt.gov/tobaccoed

Features Montana data and information including: model policy resources, map of Montana School Districts of Excellence, Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data, fact sheets, school signage information and links to tobacco free school and education resources

Department of Public Health and Human Services - Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program (MTUPP): www.tobaccofree.mt.gov

Features Montana data and information including: Montana Clean Indoor Air Act, Montana Quit Line, reACT youth empowerment movement (www.reACTMT.com), fact sheets, publications, signage information, and community contact information

Department of Public Health and Human Services - Montana Asthma Control Program: www.asthmamontana.com

Features Montana data and information including: Asthma Friendly Schools, key documents and publications, healthcare provider and clinical information, and "Asthma Friendly Schools" online teacher training

National resources

Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids

www.tobaccofreekids.org

Federal and state initiatives, research, fact sheets, special reports and state-specific data

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Tobacco Information and Prevention Source (TIPS)

www.cdc.gov/tobacco

Offers a variety of tobacco-related materials
Youth prevention materials can be downloaded from
www.cdc.gov/tobacco/youth/index.htm

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Division of Adolescent and School Health

www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/tobacco

Data and statistics, science-based strategies, national, state and local program information, publications and links

American Lung Association

www.lungusa.org

Publications, data, cessation information, state and community links
www.notontobacco.com
Offers smoking prevention and cessation programs for teens and on asthma education and indoor air quality

Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium (TTAC)

www.ttac.org

Technical assistance resources for national, state, regional and local tobacco control programs, coalitions, networks and other interested parties to promote CDC-recommended program and policy best practices

National School Boards Association Consortium on Tobacco Use Prevention through Schools

www.nsba.org/mainmenu/schoolhealth/tobaccoconsortium

Collection of resources including policy statements and guidelines, webinars, journal articles, tips, checklists, and links

Tar Wars

www.tarwars.org

School education program supported by the American Academy of Family Physicians

REAL Parents REAL Answers

www.realparentsrealanswers.com

Parents and children view interactive videos together to guide conversations and discussions about not smoking

The Foundation For A Smokefree America

www.notobacco.org

Anti-smoking site for teens

National Spit Tobacco Education Program (NSTEP)

www.nstep.org

Smokeless tobacco prevention and cessation program sponsored by Oral Health America

My Last Dip

www.mylastdip.com

Web-based smokeless tobacco cessation project

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Montana
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For more information,
visit our website at:

www.opi.mt.gov/tobaccoed

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